BOOK TALK FOUR. – There are only three complete monographs on the larvae of the British macrolepidoptera. The earliest of these is Wilson's *The Larvae of the British Lepidoptera and their Foodplants,* whose title page bears the date 1880, though in fact the work was originally issued in five parts totalling 20 numbers, the first of which appeared in 1877 and the last in 1879. The book consists of 40 lithograph plates of several hundred "Life-sized Figures, Drawn and Coloured from Nature" by Eleanora Wilson, with accompanying text by Owen S. Wilson, and depicts the larvae on their known or supposed foodplants. Notwithstanding some of the figures are rather too coarse for accurate identification, the plates have a certain charm and the book has now become a collectors' piece.

By far the finest larval monograph is William Buckler's *The Larvae of the British Butterflies and Moths.* Published in 9 volumes by the Ray Society from 1886-1899, with 164 superb coloured plates comprising 2815 figures, this work also includes the Pyraloidea and a few species of Tortricoidea and Tineoidea. Buckler's originals from which these illustrations were reproduced belonged to the late Dr. H. B. D. Kettlewell, after whose death they were offered for sale by public auction but failed to reach the reserve price and so remain the property of his widow. G. M. Haggett compiled and illustrated a supplement to Buckler, consisting of 35 coloured plates of 347 figures with accompanying text, entitled *Larvae of the British Lepidoptera not Figured by Buckler.* This was issued from 1955-1980, in the Proceedings and Transactions of the South London Entomological and Natural History Society (now British Entomological and Natural History Society), and is at present available in a collected limited edition.

Finally, there are the three out-of-print W. J. Stokoe books in Warne's "Wayside and Woodland" series. *The Caterpillars of the British Butterflies* (1944), and *The Caterpillars of British Moths* (2 vols., 1948). These contain altogether 1836 illustrations, of which 509 are coloured reproductions from water colour drawings by J. W. Dollman, and numerous black and white figures of the eggs, chrysalids and foodplants, together with an interesting text. Though in no way comparable with Buckler, these serviceable pocket size volumes have become remarkably scarce and are much sought after. – J. M. CHALMERS-HUNT.

HYBOMITRA BIMACULATA MG. F. COLLINI LYN. (DIPT.: TABANIDAE) BRED FROM AN OPEN SITUATION IN DORSET. – In the course of collecting with my friends Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Gould and their grandson at Shell Bay, Studland, Dorset (4. v. 77), an unusual-looking pupa was found buried in the damp sand beside a dune-slack and handed to me. On 26.v. a male Tabanid fly was seen to have emerged from it, clearly a *Hybomitra.* Using Oldroyd (1969) I was uncertain whether to refer it to the reddish-marked form of *H. bimaculata* Mg. known as *collini* Lyneborg, or to the much more local and rare *H. muehlfeldi* Brauer. The doubt was later resolved by Mr. J. E. Chainey at the BMNH, who kindly examined the specimen and pronounced it to be the former.

Although *H. bimaculata* is one of our commoner large Tabanids, breeding records appear to be few, and this probably applies throughout the family. There is, besides, a further point of interest here: the species is essentially a woodland one, while the situation in which the pupa was found was quite open and unshaded for a long distance around; the nearest woodland (of a rather scrubby and fragmentary nature) lay some way to the west. Sexual differences apart, this male agrees well with a female f. *collini* that I took in Ham Street Wood, Kent (11.vi.64), but is darker overall. The form is stated by Oldroyd (p.61) to be rare in Britain; he records it from only four counties, none of them south-western. The pupa case has been placed in the BM collection. – A. A. ALLEN.

EARLY APPEARANCES OF SPRING MOTHS.—A number of contributors have recently written on this subject to which the following might be added. On the evening of 28th December, 1980 I was searching for females of *Erannis defoliaria* Clerck in Fence Wood, Berkshire. In this I was unsuccessful, although males were plentiful along the rides, but a female which was noted was of *Agriopis marginaria* (F.). A male of this species was noted later in the evening. Late December seems very early for Dotted Borders. As for female *E. defoliaria,* I had to wait until 11th January when two were noted on an ash trunk at the B.B.O.N.T. Moor Copse Reserve near Tidmarsh, Berkshire. Another early appearance was that of *Cucullia verbasci* (L.) which appeared in the Caversham trap on the night of 9th/10th April.—B. R. BAKER, Reading Museum and Art Gallery, Reading, Berks.

ANOTHER PROBABLE INSTANCE OF ATTEMPTED DISPERSAL – Further to the theme of insect dispersal (A. J. Showler, vol. 92 199-200 and A. A. Allen, vol. 93, 157-158) I can cite a very interesting case of the normally flightless meadow grasshopper, *Chorthippus parallelus* (Zetterstedt) producing substantial numbers of the normally rare macropterous form *explicatus,* de Selys, as a probable consequence of a huge population build-up after the two hot summers of 1975 and 1976. The location is the well-known picnic area of Fairmile Bottom in West Sussex by the A29, grid reference 41 (SU) 9809.

Although facing north-west the site has an overall southerly slope and is warm and sheltered. A thin layer of clay overlies chalk and an extensive area of species – rich grassland is maintained by West Sussex County Council, by gang-mowing in Autumn. This has successfully prevented the invasion of scrub for the past six years.

Fairmile Bottom is noteworthy for its grasshopper fauna which includes *Chorthippus brunneus* (Thunberg), *C. parallelus* (Zetterstedt), *Gomphocerippus rufus* (L.), *Omocestus rufipes* (Zett.) *O. viridulus* (L.) and *Stenobothrus lineatus* (Panzer). By the end of August 1976 all species were present in exceptionally high numbers. In aggregate the grasshopper population at Fairmile Bottom must have totalled many thousands – so many indeed that the turf was visibly grazed by the buzzing swarms. At a rough estimate *C. parellelus* seemed to comprise about half the total population.